

CELEBRATION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF ST. JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD AND FIRST HIERARCH OF JERUSALEM AT PHANAR

The Patriarchal Representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Constantinople sent the following message on the celebration of the commemoration of St. James the Brother of God and First Hierarch of Jerusalem (new calendar), which was officiated by His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew;

“Speech of His All-holiness after Vespers He officiated at the Metochion of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem at Neohori in Constantinople”

In His speech this afternoon, October 22, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew underlined the long term strong bonds of mutual support between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, at the H. Church of St. George, Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in Neohori of Bosphorus, where He officiated the Vespers of the Feast of the Throne of the Church of Jerusalem, on the commemoration of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God. Earlier in the day, Patriarch Bartholomew was welcomed by Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedon, and Representative of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, who invited His All-holiness to officiate the liturgical festivities in honour of the Patron Saint of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

After Vespers, which was attended by the Metropolitans: Elder Apostolos of Derkon, Eirinaios of Myriofyta and Peristaseos,

Theoliptos of Ikonion, Stephanos of Kallioupolis and Madyto, Elpidoforos of Proussa, Amphilohios of Andrianoupolis, the Bishops; Makarios of Christoupolis, Andrianos of Alikarnassos, Cyril of Erythron, the Consul General of Greece in Constantinople Mrs. Georgia Soultanopoulou, Archons with distinctive honors from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and many faithful Christians, the Ecumenical Patriarch offered on behalf of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the medal of the Cross Bearer of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre to the active member of the expatriates from Neohori Mr. Panteleimon Vigas, Archon and Great Archivist of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and President of the Community of Panagia Koumariotissa in Neohori.

“The tradition of the cooperation between our two Churches is being continued”.

In His speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the over the centuries common fight of the Heads of the Churches of Constantinople and Jerusalem for the defense of the Orthodox Faith and the treasures of the Nation.

“In the Ecumenical Patriarchate, We have the noetic eyes of the heart always set towards the All-holy Shrines and walk in the places where Christ walked, and receive the mystical Grace, which up to the present, comes down like the dew of Hermon peacefully in this remote land of Bosphorus, and passes through this Holy Metochion too, which has hosted memorable and blessed Patriarchs of Jerusalem, who trooped along with Our memorable predecessors, in order to defend the Orthodox Faith and the treasures of our Nation. This is also witnessed by the frequent participation of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, who occasionally visit Constantinople, to the herein Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who co-sign the Patriarchal Acts and consort with Us on key issues of our Orthodox Church.

The tradition of this cooperation between our Churches is being continued on the same basis up to the present, during

the blessed Patriarchal Office of His Beatitude our Brother and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who stands by the rudder of the Church of Jerusalem a capable captain, leading its vessel to safe harbours. The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Our Mediocrity owe to His Beatitude, and express this in great thanksgiving, even during this sacred hour, always remembering the good cooperation with Him, and especially, during the proceedings of the Holy and Great Synod of Crete, which brought forth abundant blessings and good outcomes. Even today, when our Brotherly Church faces a new problem of expropriation of its land property, our wish is that it may overcome this danger, that Christ, the Founder of our Church may protect it and give it stability, and offer to its meritorious Head, health, longevity and success in the governance of its vessel, as it goes through many snares”.

His All-holiness pointed out that His presence at the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre “gives a chance to all of us to experience the Mystery of the Church once more, namely that “we are many in one body”. Indeed, “in union we stand strong”. On the basis of this principle, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the honoured expatriate by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

“This golden rule is embraced and practiced more than anyone else by today’s honoured by the Church of Jerusalem, Archon Great Archivist of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Mr. Lakis Vigas, a faithful and devout child of the Church and selective member of the Greek Community, a man of offering and sacrifice, to the point of self-denial, as well as a man of values and incompatible ideologist, who loves Romiosyne with passion, and has committed himself to its service, quite often to the detriment of his job, his family, his time of rest, while he has occasionally been bowed and slandered. As Archbishop and Shepherd of Constantinople, We are in the position to know the number and the details of the projects in favour of our nation, of which the initiative and spiritual

paternity belongs to Mr. Vidas, and to many others that he has signed, not only by words, but with actions, along with other distinguished expatriates.

And it is most worthy and righteous that he is being honoured today by the Brotherly Church of Jerusalem with the medal of the Cross Bearer of the Holy Sepulchre, for the Metochia of which, he has been striving for many years with tangible results. We are especially glad and thank our Brother, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, for His active manifestation of appreciation and the grateful recognition of the Church under His lead, for all things Mr. Vidas has accomplished up to the present. And this is being done after the request of His Beatitude by Our own Patriarchal hands, an event that immensely pleases Us.

You are precious for the Greek Community, Archon, civilized man, multi-lingual, hard-working, respectable, honest, with a wonderful family that God offered you in return of your many toils and sacrifices. We do not wish to continue the long list of your charismatic character, nor that of your public initiatives and achievements, limiting ourselves to the ascertainment that from the very beginning you have wanted to give a vision and a touch of optimism to the Greek Community, and convey the message that it has a future in this City.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch congratulated the distinguished man and the Archbishop of Anthedon, for his good and tedious ministry in Constantinople, as well as for the important renovation work he has accomplished at the Metochia of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Neohori, Phanar and Chalki. He wished that the Lord may give the Church of Jerusalem “every good work and stability, for the salvation of the people of God and the blessing of the multitude of the noble pilgrims of the Holy Land”.

Earlier in the day, on his warm welcome to the Ecumenical Patriarch at the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre, the

Archbishop of Anthedon, made special reference to the relations of cooperation of mutual understanding and of common course between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Head of Thrones, the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He also expressed his wishes to His All-holiness, on the occasion of the completion of twenty seven years since His election to the Ecumenical Throne.

“This Throne [...] is adorned and beautified by Your Sacred Head, which up to the present has resisted the wild waves of the sea like a strong mole, waves that display their own disgrace particularly in our contemporary era, which stem from the waters of Bosphorus once more, thinking that they are able to cause the slightest damage to the safe harbour of the Great Mother Church of Christ. However, the times when the Patriarchs of the Middle East were forced to wander the four points of the horizon for a small financial aid for their Churches, having frequently a good financial outcome, have passed long ago. [...] (You have completed) twenty seven years in the narrow and sorrowful path of a continuous sacrifice on the cross, but at the same time also of the joy of resurrection, an often contradictory point, as well as questionable by those who are ignorant of the history and ecclesiology. (You have had) twenty seven years of offering in the Church, in the Dialogue of love among the other Christian Churches, in the interest in favour of your flock, of the pursued people without any religious nor racial discrimination, in favour of the protection of the environment, and especially in favour of the sustaining of peace and progress, as well as of the prosperity and stability of the Holy Churches of God both in the East and in the West, as You have also done for every other problem that oscillates the contemporary world.” Consequently, Archbishop Nectarios delivered the official letter of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in which His Beatitude requests a certain amount of the Holy Myrrh for the needs of the flock of the Church of Jerusalem, as “a sign”, the Representative of the Holy Sepulchre said,

“of the mystical unity that stems from the Head of Thrones the Church of Constantinople, namely the New Rome, and not the Second Rome.”

On his behalf, Mr. Panteleimon Vigas expressed his deep gratitude for the special honorary distinction offered to him by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, along with his deep emotions for the fact that he received this distinction by the Ecumenical Patriarch himself.

From Secretariat-General